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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

OCI 0960/72

28 Aug.1972

State Dept. review completedErich Honecker Celebrates His 60th Birthday

SED first secretary Honecker celebrated his 60th anniversary--a milestone revered in the Communist states--on 25 August amid an outpouring of congratulations and felicitations from his domestic colleagues and foreign friends. The SED central committee presented Honecker with the Order of Karl Marx--the GDR's highest political award--while Soviet Ambassador Yefremov awarded him the Order of Lenin on behalf of the CPSU.

While the messages all conveyed a feeling of high regard for the East German leader, the one from the SED central committee was particularly noteworthy in its apparent effort to depict the political relationship between the first secretary and the rest of the party hierarchy. The central committee's message made a point of portraying Honecker as the servant of the party rather than its master. The message gave Honecker his due for his contributions to SED achievements during the party's often tumultuous history, but was more restrained in dealing with Honecker's 16 months as first secretary. The message avoided any suggestion that Honecker controlled the party and at most cited his "decisive part" in drawing up and implementing party policies. Instead, it emphasized the "collective" nature of party leadership.

A conservative public approach to Honecker's status in the SED is not surprising in view of the current disdain in the bloc for personality "cults." Moreover, Honecker's accomplishments in his short term in office have been in sensitive areas such as European detente which have involved some hard debate within the SED, and it is doubtful that the Honecker forces would choose to presume an overbearing attitude.

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Maurer's Travel Plans Include Yugoslavia in September

Premier Maurer will visit Belgrade in the first half of September, according to press announcements. Some diplomats in Bucharest report that he also plans to visit Canada and Israel, though not until "sometime in 1973."

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Maurer last led a delegation to Belgrade in January 1970. He, however, has been a frequent participant in high-level talks with the Yugoslavs, most recently in May when Tito and Ceausescu met to inaugurate the Iron Gates project on the Danube River.

Embassy Bucharest speculates that Maurer will discuss future arms cooperation with the Yugoslavs. Although the two Balkan mavericks do engage in arms cooperation, notably in the production of a jet fighter and submarines, we do not think that Maurer will emphasize arms cooperation as he is not a military affairs specialist. Instead, we believe that his talks will center on Balkan cooperation and preparations for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), each of which Ceausescu emphasized in his marathon speech to the national party conference in July. Buttressing our contention is the fact that Ceausescu and Romanian Deputy Foreign Minister Ecobescu, a specialist on European security, held talks with Soviet Ambassador Drozdenko in Bucharest on 23 and 25 August. It thus appears likely that Maurer will brief the Yugoslavs on these talks and that the Balkan independents will seek to get their ducks in order prior to further move toward a CSCE by Moscow and its client states.

Meanwhile, reports of Maurer's projected trips to Canada and Israel provide grist for speculation about his rumored retirement. The aristocratic and highly able Maurer will be 70 years of age on 23 September, but he has not fully recovered from a near fatal automobile accident in the fall of 1970. Although it now seems unlikely that he will retire on his birthday, we are not at all certain that he will stay in office beyond December, when Romania celebrates its twenty-fifth year under Communist rule.

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More Polish Views on MBFR

A Polish diplomat in Copenhagen had some interesting points to make during a recent conversation with a Danish foreign ministry official regarding possible inclusion of some MBFR subjects in a CSCE forum. Emphasizing that it was only his opinion, the Pole claimed that topics which could be discussed as "confidence-building measures" at CSCE or in a separate forum included such things as: reduction in stationed and national troops; freezing of levels of military budgets, freezing and limitation of certain types of offensive weapons; limitation of maneuvers in frontier areas; prohibition against carrying nuclear

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warheads in aircraft and prohibition against visits to European ports of ships carrying nuclear weapons. The NATO Senior Polads Committee, discussing a report of this conversation, expressed surprise at the Polish position on confidence-building measures. Some committee members said that the report indicates that NATO countries should be ready for further surprises in Eastern responses to Western proposals on these measures.

The Polish diplomat may not have been accurately reflecting the views of his government, however. When Polish Foreign Minister Olszowski visited Austria in June, he claimed that his government was against discussion of MBFR topics within a CSCE forum. Nonetheless, Poland traditionally has been very interested in arms limitation and has been more active than most East European countries in pushing the discussion of confidence-building measures at the CSCE preparatory conference. In keeping with this more activist foreign policy during the past months, therefore, we may see more Polish initiatives as the date for the conference draws near.

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